

Witness to the Ends of the Earth (11:19 – 28:31)

e. Ministry and a Riot in Thessalonica (17:1-9)

Thessalonica was the capital city of Macedonia, and was the largest and the wealthiest.

Paul continued his custom of preaching the synagogue first before pursuing other avenues of communicating the gospel. This time he goes a step further as the text alludes to him teaching 3 consecutive Sabbath days. He as defines those times at reasoning with them.

1. Prepared to give an answer
2. Teaching both relationship and knowledge
3. Willing to have a difficult conversation

*Paul's comments in
1 Thessalonians 1:9
indicate that many
of those converted
during this time
were pagans.*

As seems to always be the case the Jews feel threatened and jealous of the teaching of Christ and create false accusations toward those doing the work of the kingdom.

The Riot – Paul and Silas are not available but those who put them up with a place to stay are available. The claim on all is “men who have caused trouble all over the world.”

This is exciting because “trouble” can actually be perceived by Christians as a good thing in this case. They are aiding in changing the world.

Turmoil often results when the gospel challenges people to change their lives, and usually such turmoil originates with those who reject this challenge.

f. Ministry Among the Noble Bereans (17:10-15)

Paul and Silas (along with Timothy 1 Thess. 2:17-18) were sent by Jason to Berea to continue ministry. This was most likely a result of the bond that Jason and the brothers posted. It probably came with a promise that they would send them out of the city to ensure further uproar would not occur.

Berea is a Greek speaking city. Paul chose to go here most likely to stay within the culture that he had been preaching to now for some time. He proceeded to the synagogue and discovered the “Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians.”

1. They accepted the message with great eagerness and study the scriptures every day (v.11)
2. They expressed an attitude of humble receptivity, that lies at the heart of faith.

Paul had to make a sudden exit from Berea, because the Jews from Thessalonica had come to the town and roused the crowds.

g. Ministry among Jews and Intellectuals in Athens (17:16-34)

1. Paul was broken for this culture (v.16)

He spoke in the main “marketplace” of the city. During Paul’s evangelism of the city of Socrates, he used the method of Socrates. DEBATE!

2. Paul seized the opportunity (v.22)
 - (a) Very religious

One of the most frustrating parts of Paul’s ministry was that he had to leave certain towns before he was ready. Despite this, three very strong churches were established in these towns.

- (b) Missing Yahweh God – the unknown to them
- 3. Paul communicates truth in a pluralistic society (v.24)
- 4. Paul Calls for repentance from idolatry (v. 29-31)
- 5. Paul left the result up to God (v. 32-34)

h. Ministry and a Legal Victory in Corinthians (18:1-17)

Paul is on the move and goes to Corinth. Here he would stay for 18 months which is one of his longer stays in one city. It was the 3rd largest city in the Roman Empire under Rome and Alexandria. Corinth had a reputation for immorality.

“It is plain from his two letters to the Corinthians that the church which he planted there caused him many a headache; it was turbulent and unruly, but it was undoubtedly alive, and remains so to this day.” - F.F. Bruce

We see that Paul was bi-vocational during his time in Corinth. He was a tentmaker and missionary.

Interesting that Luke points this out. It shows us that Paul despite his day job did not lose focus of his mission and purpose. Tentmaker and Evangelist during the week and Pastor and Teacher on the Sabbath (v.4)

A turning point in Paul’s ministry occurs during this section! (v.5-7)

Jews continue to reject, Gentiles get the Focus!

Paul is charged again for “stirring things up” but is dismissed and the Jews are told to deal with issue themselves as it concerns their law. Paul is preaching grace through Christ and not by the law. The law cannot save but Christ can. This is a real issue for Jews!

i. Itinerating En Route to Antioch (18:18-22)

Paul feels the Holy Spirit calling him away from Corinth and back to Antioch.

The Hair Cut Significance

A vow is complete, mostly likely the vow he made before the Lord to go. This protection during his stay in Corinth is now followed by a symbol of thanksgiving and completion.

The Second Missionary Journey is now finished.

The Third Missionary Journey (18:23 – 21:16)

a. Ministry in Galatia and Phrygia (18:23)

Paul makes a pass through these towns which he had previously evangelized to do some strengthening ministry on his way to Ephesus.

b. Insertion: The completion of Apollos (18:24-28)

Luke interjects a short story about Apollos, who completes his understanding of the Gospel. He was from Alexandria, which eventually becomes the intellectual center for Christianity and produced some of the greatest scholars of the early church, i.e. Clement and Origen.

It was clear that Apollos was a foretaste of what would come from the city of Alexandria as he was described as learned in scripture, speaking with favor, and teaching accurately.

c. The Completion of Twelve Ephesians (19:1-7)

Paul finally arrives in a city he had long to be part of, but was waiting on the Holy Spirit to lead him there. Remember he spent a very short time there but was

forced to leave. The message obviously continued and now there are disciples who have limited understanding and belief in Jesus.

What was the confusion?

John's Baptism – meaning they knew John's teaching that a Messiah would come but had not gotten any further in their faith. They needed to understand the fullness of Jesus death, burial and resurrection. They also needed to know they have access to the Holy Spirit which they were clueless about. (19:2)

Baptism by any other name, even John the Baptist, was not equal to Jesus. Baptism in the name of Christ is symbolic of the covenant promises.

d. Apologetic and Power Ministry in Ephesus (19:8-22)

The synagogue once again was a bridge for Paul as he began to teach. Ephesus was different in that it contained some who already believed and many "semi-believers." Semi-believers were those who heard, believed most, but had not yet professed and were not baptized.

The Holy Spirits power was great in Paul.

- 1. Bold preaching (v.8)**
- 2. Extraordinary miracles (v.11-13)**

Spiritual Battle was greatest in Ephesus. (Ephesians 6)

Magicians and Sorcerers would often utter the name of God giving a huge misrepresentation of healing. The demon that they wish to cast out saw right through the false proclamation of Jesus and did not budge.

This moment defined the true from the false in Ephesus and people began to fear the name of the Lord.

e. The riot in Ephesus (19:23-41)

Yet another Riot in a town Paul was doing ministry in.

*This Riot in Ephesus,
especially its
conclusion in the
acquittal of the
Christians – fits the
theme that Luke
considered important:
opposition to the
gospel. – A. Fernando*

Paul is encouraged not to appear due to the silliness of the riot. Many do not even know why they are there but were caught up in the moment and wanted to be a part of something.

f. Encouraging the Churches in Macedonia, Greece, and Troas (20:1-16)

Paul returns through many of the cities where he had already established churches to encourage them as he often did.

While in Troas – The Miracle of Dead Man being raised. (v.7-12)

- Paul preached with urgency till midnight.
- Eutychus fell asleep and fell out the third story window
- Paul walked out, laid on him, healed him, and then shared in communion with all those present.

g. Encourage the Ephesians Elders in Miletus (20:17-38)

Paul was leading by Example

- 1. He identified with the people (v.18-19)**
- 2. Paul was a teacher (v.20)**
- 3. Paul was a witness to the gospel (v.21)**
- 4. Paul suffered because of obedience (v.22-23)**

Key Verse – However I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. Acts 20:24

h. In Tyre and Caesarea (21:1-16)

Paul sets sail after a difficult departure from Miletus to continue his route to Jerusalem.

The Prophecy of what would come

- 1. He would be bound**
- 2. Handed over to the Gentiles**
- 3. Possible Death**

Paul is convinced of his destination and of the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Paul in Jerusalem (21:17 – 23:11)

a. Paul Meets the Jerusalem Christians (21:17-26)

Paul is confronted yet again with the question of the law of circumcision versus the his preaching of baptism and refers them to the letter which was written

earlier clarifying such issues. With this however he does fulfill his earlier vow by going through the customary rites of ceremonial cleanliness and so do the four men with him.

This is in keeping with his later statement and belief; “I must become all things to all people so that I might win them for sake of the gospel.” 1 Corinthians 9:20

b. Paul is arrested (21:27-36)

The prophecy told to Paul and his understanding of how he would suffer for the sake of the gospel is continuing to come true in his arrest.

The acts prior to arrest

- **Paul entered the temple – four purified Gentiles did so as well**
 - **Gentile were only allowed in the outer court**
 - **Roman citizens can be tried for such an offense**
- **Taken and beaten**
 - **Not so much for the offence that they are trying to convict him of but for the grudge they still hold that he has included Gentiles in the promise.**
- **Soldiers actually save his life**
- **He is placed in prison and will face trial**

This issue of between the message of the gospel and Jews is extremely important to Luke as he continues to point out the contention that remains over this issue.

Despite this Paul never gives up trying to win the Jews.